

July 28, 1997

Diane B. Frankel, Director
Institute of Museum and Library Services
c/o Office of Library Services
1100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Rm. 802
Washington, D.C. 20506

Dear Ms. Frankel:

I am pleased to forward to you the original and one copy of the LSTA Five-Year State Plan for California, covering FY 1998-2002, in accordance with instructions in the 1998 State Grant Program Guidelines, received with IMLS Program Memorandum FY 97-4. This document has been reviewed by a wide variety of individual citizens, user groups, friends, trustees and commissioners, librarians, and our state advisory council. The advice and comments received from these efforts contributed tangibly to preparation of the Plan.

The required Assurances and Certification are also enclosed.

This Plan reflects our best judgment regarding our most vital goals and about the proper role for federal funding in this state, at this time and for the coming five year period. We have taken great care to articulate and synchronize the purposes to which LSTA will be put with related library programs funded at the state level. We resolve to ensure that the maximum mileage must be gained from all scarce resources made available for libraries from every source.

Because California is so large and diverse, the time to define priorities has been limited; and we are now working, with these federal funds, with a large, new constituency in California (i.e. California's 6,000 school libraries). In that connection, we have chosen not to prematurely define restricted priorities for use of LSTA funds in this first year but rather to experiment flexibly with them to address the purposes defined in the Act and the vast array of needs defined by current, formal needs assessment processes.

We have actively solicited library and user needs input through more than 25 separate events or solicitations for comment over the last 18 months and have a list of 101 needs stated by various library constituencies to date. Still, we know that we do not have a complete, prioritized picture of the most important California library needs that are appropriate to support through LSTA funding. This is particularly true of school libraries, for which we do not yet have good connections, because they are a group of libraries with which the State Library has had little contact in the past. We do not feel confident, yet, that we have gotten sufficient input from this type of library and library user to be reasonably certain we know what areas are most appropriate to limit federal funding to in the first five years of LSTA. Consequently, we are using the applications received for 1997/98 funding, a continuing set of formal contacts through the State Department of Education, and links with school libraries and California school librarians through their professional association (California School Librarians Association - CSLA), to refine our additional efforts before proposing any strict priorities.

We also wish to work with libraries of all types in California to formally prioritize the extensive list of needs defined so far. Some priorities are already clear, and these are reflected in the current State Plan. Principal among these are our continuing efforts to improve library services for our many different underserved groups in California and implementation of California's multitype networking effort, which has been in early testing phases for 20 years and been formally planned and developed over more than eight years. However, these areas are, of course, not the only areas of import to California libraries. It is equally important to Californians and the nation as a whole that individual California libraries can effectively serve their defined constituencies, and we must carefully assess all priorities for the most critical service improvements and for most appropriate federal roles in supporting and improving those.

We plan to address more specific priorities for targeting use of federal LSTA funding and determining most appropriate and important uses of the federal funds in support of school library constituents in this first year of LSTA grant support. We will obtain necessary, additional school library input to focus that area of LSTA support and will formally refine California's library priorities for addressing the needs that have been established. We will define additional school library needs, as necessary, and prioritize all needs established into more specific goals, objectives, and activities for use of LSTA funds in our next revision of our State Plan. Given the size, diversity, and complexity of California, I believe that this approach is the most fiscally-responsible use of the limited-but-extremely-valuable federal funds.

We propose in general, then, to use LSTA funds in 1997/98 as flexibly as possible under the purposes of the Act and, in this time period, propose to carefully refine and prioritize the most critical areas which these funds should support in California, while still addressing the purposes of the Act and define that more limited set of priorities in the next revision of our State Plan.

California is grateful to you and your staff for bringing LSTA to life and for providing smooth sailing during the transition from LSCA. Please call upon us at any time for any support we might provide in your ongoing and spirited advocacy of the program. Should you have any questions pertaining to the document, please contact LSTA Coordinator Jay Cunningham at (916) 653-8112. Our fax no. is (916) 653-8443.

Thank you for your continued assistance and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kevin Starr
State Librarian of California

cc: Liz Gibson
Jay Cunningham
Liz Peralta

Enclosure